
The relation between reason and goodness in John Finnis

La relación entre la razón y el bien en John Finnis

Douglas FLIPPEN

Christendom College
dflippen@christendom.edu

RECIBIDO: 28/10/2020 / ACEPTADO: 21/12/2020

Abstract: John Finnis joins Grisez in providing a new foundation for Thomistic natural law theory. To accomplish this, they closely associate good as perfection with good as to be pursued and have both senses grasped together by the practical intellect independently of the speculative intellect. The practical intellect then presents good to the will and motivates it to act for the first time. Since good as perfection is inherently speculative and since the intellect becomes practical only depending on the will, their notion of the practical intellect is incoherent and their new foundation is deeply flawed.

Keywords: practical intellect, speculative intellect, will, good.

Resumen: John Finnis se une con Grisez para ofrecernos una nueva fundamentación de la ley natural tomista. Los dos autores asocian estrechamente la noción de bien como perfección con la de bien como algo a ser perseguido, correspondiendo la captación de ambas nociones al entendimiento práctico con independencia del especulativo. Así las cosas, el entendimiento práctico presenta el bien a la voluntad y le ofrece a ésta las primeras razones para la acción. Como el bien como perfección es algo inherentemente especulativo y como el entendimiento se convierte en práctico dependiendo de la voluntad, su noción de entendimiento práctico es incoherente y su nueva fundamentación, profundamente defectuosa.

Palabras clave: entendimiento práctico, entendimiento especulativo, voluntad, bien.

I. INTRODUCTION

In 1965 Germain Grisez published his commentary on the first principle of practical reason, as it appears in Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 94, a. 2, c¹. In 1967 his article on the last end of man appeared². In that article he went over problems with St. Thomas' account of the end of man, specifically tensions both within the account of the natural end of man and also between the accounts of the natural and the supernatural ends of man.

¹ GRISEZ, G., «The First Principle of Practical Reason: A Commentary on the *Summa Theologiae*, 1-2, Question 94, Article 2», *Natural Law Forum*, vol. 10, n. 1, 1965, pp. 168-201.

² GRISEZ, G., «Man, Natural End of», *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed., vol. 15, 2003, pp. 96-103.

These two articles, especially the one appearing in the *Natural Law Forum*, appear to be the beginning of Grisez' new formulation of the traditional natural law theory, a project in which he would be joined by John Finnis, Joseph Boyle and others. That this is the case appears to be verified in an article published jointly by Germain Grisez and John Finnis in 1981³. In that article, referring to Grisez' article from 1967, the authors write:

«As Grisez argued in another article... Thomas' theory of the natural end of man remains incoherent just to the extent that he was more Aristotelian than the reality of human nature, open to divine life, allows»⁴.

The article by Finnis and Grisez is one that responds to criticisms coming from Ralph McInerny. McInerny's criticisms were directed at two works: Grisez' essay from 1965, and Finnis' 1980 book on *Natural law and Natural Rights*⁵. In a comment coming at the very end of their joint essay responding to McInerny, Finnis and Grisez must be referring to the 1965 essay by Grisez on natural law when they write:

«Grisez's work in ethics began precisely as an attempt to carry out this task [relating natural law to man's ultimate end]. He became convinced that Thomas' account of the ultimate end is inconsistent with his account of natural law. This conviction led him to develop his own ethical theory, which is heavily indebted to Thomas but which is autonomously grounded»⁶.

The present essay will focus on the «autonomous grounding» of the new theory of natural law. That Finnis joins himself readily to this new theory of natural law is indicated not only by his coauthoring several items with Grisez, but also by his various endorsements of Grisez' work in *Natural Law and Natural Rights*⁷. I will focus on the thought of John Finnis, especially as contained in his 1980 work on natural law, with references to Grisez where necessary. I will consider the new natural law theory especially in light of

³ GRISEZ, G. and FINNIS, J., «The Basic Principles of Natural Law: A Reply to Ralph McInerny», *American Journal of Jurisprudence*, n. 26, 1981, pp. 21–31.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

⁵ FINNIS, J., *Natural Law and Natural Rights*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1980.

⁶ GRISEZ, G. and FINNIS, J., «The Basic Principles of Natural Law: A Reply to Ralph McInerny», *op. cit.*, pp. 21–31.

⁷ FINNIS, J., *Natural Law and Natural Rights*, *op. cit.*, pp. vii, 53, 76, 129, 157.

good and true as transcendentals and how our intellect and will are related to them, an approach Aertsen indicated was «seldom mooted in studies on natural law»⁸.

Finnis and Grisez see themselves as adherents of St. Thomas' theory of natural law. They accept the self-evident starting point for practical reason's guidance of human action outlined by St. Thomas in his treatment of natural law, namely «good is to be done and pursued and evil is to be avoided»⁹. They also accept the notion that our goal is to fulfill or perfect ourselves as human beings by the way we act. And yet, when it comes to being specific about the good to be done, they both agree and disagree. They agree with Thomas about the variety of goods which, based on our natural inclinations, we self-evidently see to be good. On the other hand, Thomas thinks that the highest perfection a human being can attain must depend most of all on the perfection of a person's highest power, namely the intellect. Finnis and Grisez think that the highest perfection and good a human being can attain consists in an objectively non-hierarchical collection of basic goods, which corresponds «to the irreducibly diverse components of complex human nature»¹⁰.

What explains this parting of the ways? Since both Finnis and Thomas think that it is reason that grasps the good that is to be done, there must be some difference in understanding how human reason is related to the good that we seek. How does St. Thomas think the human intellect grasps goodness; how does Finnis think the human intellect grasps goodness? When we grasp that «good is to be done», we must have some grasp of what «good» means. How do we come by it? Is it prior to knowing that good is to be done, or is it simultaneous with it in some way? Is the initial grasp of goodness had by the speculative or by the practical intellect? How does the will enter the picture and how is it related to the intellect and to goodness?

I intend to argue that, according to Thomas, our original grasp of good is of the truth of good as perfection or wholeness of being. Such a grasp is an act of the speculative intellect. It is the speculative intellect that discovers that

⁸ AERTSEN, J.A., «Natural Law in the Light of the Doctrine of Transcendentals», *Lex et Libertas*, L.J. Elders S.V.D. and K. Hedwig (eds.), Citta del Vaticano, 1987, pp. 99-112.

⁹ AQUINAS, T., *Summa Theologiae*, part I-II, question 94; Article 2, body of the article (I-II, q. 94, a. 2, c), trans., Fathers of the English Dominican Province, 3 vols., Benziger Brothers, New York, 1947-1948, p. 1009.

¹⁰ FINNIS, J., GRISEZ, G., and BOYLE, J., «Practical Principles, Moral Truth, and Ultimate Ends», *American Journal of Jurisprudence*, vol. 32, 1987, pp. 99-151, p. 133.

good as completeness of being is the basis for good as desired and as desirable. Such a knowing of good as perfection or as perfective is speculative because it is a knowing of reality as it actually or possibly is and not a knowing of what we are to do or make. It is this speculative grasp of good, whether it is the intellect grasping completeness of being from the world about us, or the intellect naturally desiring its own actuality when it is reduced from potency to act, that originally enables the will to incline to good as to its natural object. It is also a speculative grasp of good that enables Thomas, following Aristotle, to establish an objective hierarchy of good for all human beings.

There is a second way, according to Thomas, in which good is grasped by the intellect. The inclining of the will to speculatively grasped good as its natural object enables the intellect to know good in a new and practical way, i.e. as what is to be sought. When the practical intellect figures out ways to pursue the good that is the object of the will, the will then follows the lead of the practical intellect. The point here is simple: between the intellect and the will, both taken simply, it is the intellect that must act first. The will cannot act without having its object presented to it; it is the speculative intellect that originally grasps good and presents it to the will. The intellect acts first insofar as it has a natural inclination to perform its own act. Between the will and the practical intellect, on the other hand, it is the will that must take the first step. The reason is clear: no cognitive power directs or motivates us by itself to act on things about us, but only by dependence on an appetitive power. The practical intellect directs us to act; hence it must do so as ultimately subordinate to the will, the rational appetite. Because this is natural and in accord with the natures of the intellect and the will, it does not make the practical intellect the «slave of the will»¹¹. Because our original grasp of good is speculative, any reasoning performed by the speculative intellect to determine what ultimately perfects us as human beings is not at all off limits to the practical intellect in its attempts to grasp what is to be done. This means that if the intellect sees that it itself is the highest power in a person and that its own knowing of what is most knowable is what will perfect us more than anything else, then it objectively follows for every intellectual being (God, angel, human being) that the contemplation of the highest good in reality is where perfection or fulfillment is most of all to be found. This does not involve the practical intellect

¹¹ FINNIS, J., *Aquinas: Moral, Political, and Legal Theory*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1998, pp. 89–90.

deducing or inferring its own naturally known principles of reasoning from any speculative truths about human nature. What it involves is, first, that the naturally known starting point of the practical intellect presupposes a meaning of good first grasped speculatively, and, secondly, the use of speculative knowledge of good in any reasoning whose primary premise is practical.

Finnis, on the other hand, while holding that good primarily means fulfillment or perfection, writes as if it is not the speculative but rather the practical intellect that originally grasps good and does so precisely in its activity of knowing the good that is to be done. He says that it is the practical intellect that originally grasps good precisely as perfective of us and that the speculative intellect comes to understand what is good for us as human beings mainly by depending on the practical intellect. Because the practical intellect grasps the basic goods that will perfect us by insights based on our natural inclinations and possibilities, and because no objective hierarchy of basic goods that holds for all human beings is revealed in such insights, and because no one basic good seems to be more of an object of inclination than others for all human beings, there is no basic good that is objectively higher than all others for all human beings. He does not accept the reasoning by means of which Aristotle and Thomas establish the ultimate end of man as contemplation of God before setting about determining how we practically attain such a goal. Nor does he appear to allow a speculative grasp of what is most of all good for us as human beings to be added to a syllogism that begins with a practical premise. This seems inconsistent in that he does allow other speculative truths to be included in such a practical syllogism. On the other hand, it is not so inconsistent if, as Finnis seems to believe, goodness as such, i.e. goodness as perfect or perfective, and as to be pursued and done, is originally grasped by the practical intellect based on inclinations to act on the level of the senses. If goodness as perfect or fulfilling is not originally grasped by the speculative intellect, then inclined to by the will, and then grasped by the practical intellect as to be pursued and done, then we can begin to see why Grisez and Finnis argue the way they do. If, as they believe, goodness is originally grasped by the practical intellect, abstracting it from sensory experience, and then presented to the will, the speculative intellect has no business interfering with any practical reasoning about what is good and what is to be done, as long as that reasoning is taking place on a foundational level. The speculative intellect can provide information about the nutritive qualities of wheaties which can be used in a practical syllogism; the speculative intellect cannot provide the truth about goodness as such, i.e., good is what is perfect

or perfective, to the reasoning of the practical intellect. This, according to Finnis and Grisez, is what Aristotle and Thomas are doing when, having begun their ethical reasoning using the practical intellect's understanding of the basic goods, they then begin asking in a speculative way what is the most perfect state or condition a human being can be in, and go on to use the argument that contemplation of what is highest in reality is the most perfective activity for a human being. Such a mixing of the speculative and practical intellects in the foundation of ethical reasoning can only lead to problems, or so they argue.

The problem Finnis encounters with holding that good as perfect or perfective is originally grasped by the practical intellect is that goodness as so considered is an inherently speculative notion. The practical intellect would then, for Finnis, seem to be both speculative and practical at the same time. Another problem is that if good is first grasped by the practical intellect, as Finnis claims, but the intellect is in fact practical only by being subordinate to the will inclining to the good, then Finnis is effectively making good depend, not on perfection, despite what he claims, but rather on object of inclination. He has been accused of this more than once and denies that that is his position. If, on the other hand, his basic notion of good is wholeness of being, and if this is an inherently speculative notion, he is implicitly holding that the speculative intellect must grasp good first. The problem is that the Thomistic perspective as here presented is exactly what Grisez and Finnis are rejecting. They do not even think it is Thomistic. They are apparently convinced that good is originally abstracted by the practical intellect from the sensible level just as being and truth are originally abstracted from the sensible level by the speculative intellect. Hence the debate seems to come down to the question of the nature of the practical intellect and how good is originally grasped by any intellectual being. It is noteworthy that Finnis and Grisez often enough argue that their critics misunderstand them. It appears that a major source of the misunderstanding is the different understanding of the practical intellect and how good is grasped that lies at the very foundation of the theory of natural law which they propound.

To argue for my conclusion that good is originally grasped by the speculative intellect and that the intellect becomes practical only after the will has inclined to good as grasped by the speculative intellect, I will first inquire into what 'good' means. Next, I will consider the nature of the intellect, especially as distinguished into speculative and practical, and the nature of the will, and how the practical intellect and will are interrelated. Then I will inquire how human reason is related to goodness as such and to the good for which we

act. Because Finnis ordinarily writes as if he understands Thomas better than other natural law theorists, and because he quotes Thomas frequently, I will often refer to Thomas in my treatment of Finnis.

II. FINNIS AND THOMAS AND THE NATURE OF GOODNESS

Finnis contends that he agrees with Thomas that good as perfection or well-being is the basic notion of good. It is this notion of good that makes the good desirable and gives rise to good as what is to be pursued and done. Finnis rightly argues that a knowledge of something as good cannot simply be inferred from the fact that it is desired, even by all¹². The point is simply that the nature of goodness does not consist in being desired. Finnis also reasons that things seem desirable to us insofar as they will make us better¹³.

In an earlier text on the goodness of knowledge, he writes: «Is it not the case that knowledge is really a good, an aspect of authentic human flourishing...»¹⁴. Here there is no reference to desire or desirability. Even more emphatically, in a note to the above text indicating that things seem desirable because they promise to make us better, Finnis refers to a number of places in the writings of Thomas wherein he argues that «desirability is consequent upon completion (or fulfilment) for things always desire their completion...»¹⁵. Finnis even quotes the following text from Thomas' commentary on Aristotle's *De Anima*:

«All knowledge is obviously good because the good of anything is that which belongs to the fullness of being which all things seek after and desire; and man as man reaches fullness of being through knowledge»¹⁶.

In an essay on natural inclinations, commenting on a text of Thomas about a natural appetite being a tendency to a good of nature, Finnis writes: «Here is the clue we were seeking; to speak of natural inclination(s) is to speak

¹² FINNIS, J., *Natural Law and Natural Rights*, op. cit., p. 66.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 70; pp. 72 and 195; also, FINNIS, J., *Fundamentals of Ethics*, Georgetown University Press, Georgetown, 1983, p. 44, and *Aquinas: Moral, Political, and Legal Theory*, op. cit., pp. 91-92.

¹⁴ FINNIS, J., *Natural Law and Natural Rights*, op. cit., p. 64.

¹⁵ AQUINAS, T., *Summa Theologiae*, op. cit., I, q. 5, a. 1, body.

¹⁶ ARISTOTLE'S, *De Anima*, lectio 1, n. 3, trans., Kenelm Foster, O.P. and Silvester Humphries, O.P., Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1951; as found in FINNIS, J., *Natural Law and Natural Rights*, op. cit., p. 79.

of the perfection(s) of the being which has such inclination(s)»¹⁷. What is missing here is an argument establishing that when practical reason grasps good based on inclinations, it is also grasping good as perfection and is doing so all by itself. Perhaps what Finnis assumes here is that, because good is the first concept that falls into the practical intellect, it must therefore be the practical intellect that first grasps good. The conclusion simply does not follow.

The conclusion is that Finnis seems to agree with Thomas about the nature of goodness: it is fullness of being that is naturally desired. But problems seem to arise when we inquire further into the nature of goodness. For Thomas the notion of goodness as perfection is the truth about the nature of goodness. As such it is inherently speculative because it is about what is the case, to use Finnis' own terms. Goodness as desired or as the end of motion or activity, goodness as what is to be done, is goodness as related to the will and is inherently practical. For Finnis, on the other hand, goodness as perfection, and goodness as what is to be done and what is desired, are both practical in nature, as we will see, although goodness as perfection can become speculative when reflected on speculatively¹⁸ after being discovered by practical reason¹⁹. Let us now consider the more detailed consideration of goodness in Thomas.

Good has two meanings in Aristotle and Thomas: one speculative (perfection) and one practical (what is to be done, what all things desire) and the speculative precedes the practical and the practical sense depends on the speculative.

Early in the *Summa Theologiae*, after discussing the perfection of God, Thomas discusses goodness in general and then the goodness of God. In doing so he argues the real identity of goodness and being as follows: 1) the essence of goodness is that it is desirable, 2) a thing is desirable insofar as it is perfect, 3) perfection is completeness of being or actuality, 4) hence it is always being or existence that is good insofar as that being is desirable²⁰. In the response to the first objection Thomas clarifies the relation between being and goodness. A thing is said to be, simply speaking, as long as it exists substantially; it is said to be good, simply speaking, only to the extent that it is

¹⁷ FINNIS, J., «Natural Inclinations and Natural Rights: Deriving 'Ought' from 'Is' According to Aquinas», *Freedom and Law According to St. Thomas Aquinas*, L.J., Elders S.V.D., and Hedwig, K., Vatican City (eds.), 1987, pp. 43-55, p. 45; also, FINNIS, *Aquinas*, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

¹⁸ FINNIS, J., *Natural Law and Natural Rights*, *op. cit.*, p. 380.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 33-34; also, *Fundamentals of Ethics*, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

²⁰ AQUINAS, T., *Summa Theologiae*, *op. cit.*, I-I, q. 5, a. 1, pp. 23-24.

complete in being. The emphasis is on perfection in being, as Thomas indicates a bit later: «the nature of good follows being in so far as being is in some way perfect; for thus it is desirable»²¹. A thing is then only relatively good if it is only relatively complete in being. To be simply good it must be simply complete in being. What is complete in itself is good in itself; what is complete of another is good for that other. What is good in itself would be an object of love or delight; what is good, in the sense of perfective, for a person, would be an object of desire²².

Thomas writes that «goodness is spoken of as more or less according to a thing's superadded actuality, for example as to knowledge or virtue»²³. This makes it clear that the more a thing has being or actuality, as long as that actuality belongs to it as the kind of thing it is, the better it is. Of all the accidents that may be added to a thing to increase it in being, and thus make it better or more perfect, the accident that naturally comes last is the way of acting that belongs to that thing, as Thomas indicates: «... the last thing through which any real being is ordered to its end is its operation»²⁴. He makes the same point in his commentary on Aristotle's *De Anima* in a text quoted earlier²⁵.

If good as completeness in being is an accurate account of good as speculatively grasped by us, then we should naturally delight in watching things act, for it is then that they would be good in the sense of being complete in being. This appears to be the case.

That the speculative sense of good comes before the practical is indicated from a text in which Thomas is comparing the two senses of good, *i.e.*, speculative and practical:

«The true and the good include each other, since the true is a good and every good is true. Therefore, the good can be considered speculatively when only its truth is considered. For example, we can define the

²¹ AQUINAS, T., *Summa Theologiae*, *op. cit.*, I-I, q. 16, a. 4, c.

²² AQUINAS, T., *Summa Contra Gentiles*, book I, chs. 37 and 39, trans., Pegis, A.C., F.R.S.C., University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, 1955, pp. 151-152, 154-155; book III, Part I, ch. 39, trans., Bourke, V.J., Notre Dame, 1956, pp. 127-130; *Compendium of Theology*, part 2, ch. 9, trans., Vollert, C., S.J., B. Herder Book Co., St. Louis, 1947, p. 332; *Summa Theologiae*, *op. cit.*, I-I, q. 4, a. 1 - a. 2, and I-I, q. 16, a. 4, c.

²³ AQUINAS, T., *Summa Theologiae*, *op. cit.*, I-I, q. 5, a. 1, reply to 3rd objection, p. 26.

²⁴ AQUINAS, T., *Summa Contra Gentiles*, *op. cit.*, III, Part I, ch. 22, n. 1, vol. 3, p. 83.

²⁵ ARISTOTLE'S, *De Anima*, *op. cit.*, 16.

good and show what its nature is. But the good can also be considered practically if it is considered as a good, that is, as an end of a motion or operation»²⁶.

Since the true, considered as a transcendental, comes before the good considered in the same way, the truth about the good would come before the good considered as the end of an operation. Considering the good as the end of an operation presupposes, as we will see, an act of the will inclining us toward good, and the act of the will inclining us toward good presupposes an act of the intellect grasping the very essence or nature of good.

There are two ways in which goodness as perfective operates²⁷. One may be perfected by receiving the likenesses of the forms of other things within oneself. This is the way the person possessing cognitive powers is properly perfected precisely as a cognitive being. The will is not needed to initiate this mode of perfection. One may also be perfected by becoming united to the actual existence of a thing perfective of one. This is the way one is perfected by eating what sustains one; it is also the way one is perfected by being united to another person as a friend. The will, or an appetitive power, is needed to bring about this mode of perfection. The two modes of perfection come together in the beatific vision, according to Thomas. In addition, with the possession of God in the beatific vision, all good is possessed²⁸.

The second sense of good is that it is what is to be pursued or done. This is the practical sense of good. It clearly follows on the first sense of good as perfection. If perfection or completeness in being is the most basic sense of good, and if it is what we delight in whenever we watch something act, then, to the extent that one is not perfect in being, and has a natural inclination to it, perfection is to be sought and done. It is to be sought in the sense that one is seeking to actualize one's potentialities; it is to be done in the sense that it is primarily by acting that we actualize our potentialities and become more perfect. While natural inclinations do not define what makes their objects good, they are like natural signs revealing what is objectively good. Because such inclinations are natural, *i.e.* in accord with the nature of a thing, the objects to which they incline us are suitable or conformable to the nature of the thing possessing such inclinations.

²⁶ AQUINAS, T., *Truth*, I, q. 3, a. 3, ad. 9, trans., W. Mulligan, R., S.J., 3 vols., Henry Regnery Company, Chicago, 1952, p. 155.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, III, q. 21, a. 3, c., pp. 14-15.

²⁸ AQUINAS, T., *Compendium of Theology*, *op. cit.*, part 2, ch. 9, p. 340.

III. FINNIS AND THOMAS ON THE INTELLECT AND THE WILL

Reason, according to Finnis, is an ability to discover truth.²⁹ The will, on the other hand, has complete or universal good as its object³⁰. The will cannot grasp good on its own; it is dependent on the intellect to present goodness to it. Hence the object of the will is good grasped by the intellect as intelligible³¹. As such, acts of the will are responses to reasons³². Clearly, then, the intellect must function before the will. Because the intellect must function first and because the will is dependent on it for its object, the will is said to be in the intellect rather than the intellect being said to be in the will³³. All this agrees with Thomas. But when Thomas, following Aristotle, relates the intellect and will to one another simply, he emphasizes the two different ways they are related to the world about us so as to form a circular pattern. Because he holds that it is the practical intellect, and not the will, which initiates the movement toward the world about us, Finnis does not describe the interrelation between intellect and will in the same fashion.

According to Thomas, the cognitive and appetitive powers are closely interrelated. Described as if they were motions, their actions form a circle. Things in the world about us act on us and give themselves to our cognitive powers. This means a cognitive power as such is receptive and originally speculative of things. Appetitive powers, on the other hand, having been informed by cognitive powers and thereby receiving their objects from them, then act on actually existing things in the world about us. This completes the circular motion³⁴. This means that if a cognitive power appears to be directing us to act on things in the world about us, it must do so by dependence on an appetitive power. This means that before the intellect can grasp any truth about what is to be done, even a *per se nota* one, it must be preceded by an act of the will inclining to good. Grisez and Finnis, as we will see, reject the need for the will to act first before the practical intellect directs us to act on the world

²⁹ FINNIS, J., *Fundamentals of Ethics*, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

³⁰ FINNIS, J., «Practical Reasoning, Human Goods, and the End of Man», *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association*, 1984, pp. 23-36, p. 27.

³¹ FINNIS, J., *Aquinas: Moral, Political, and Legal Theory*, *op. cit.*, p. 70, cit. 39.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 89.

³³ FINNIS, J., *Fundamentals of Ethics*, *op. cit.*, p. 47; *Aquinas: Moral, Political, and Legal Theory*, *op. cit.*, p. 62, cit. 15.

³⁴ AQUINAS, T., *Truth*, *op. cit.*, q. 1, a. 2, c and «On the Power of God», q. 9, a. 9, c.

about us. For them, the world acts on our senses and, through them, on both the speculative and practical intellects. At that point the practical intellect, acting on the basis of inclinations (initially excluding that of the will) directs us to act and the will follows its direction.

IV. SPECULATIVE AND PRACTICAL INTELLECTS

Finnis agrees with Thomas that, while there is only one human intellect, yet it can be described as if it were two in so far as it has the two distinct functions of knowing simply for the sake of knowing, and knowing for the sake of directing activity. These two functions of the one intellect give rise to the one intellect being called speculative or practical, depending on how it is functioning. This comes out in a succinct fashion when he writes:

«When discerning what is good, to be pursued, intelligence is operating in a different way, yielding a different logic, from when it is discerning what is the case»³⁵.

It comes out more clearly in a later work as follows:

«... Aristotle and Aquinas were well enough aware that each of us has only one intelligence, only one capacity...of understanding. So, the differences between ‘theoretical’ and ‘practical’ understanding are simply operational differences. And there are these differences between one’s intellectual operations simply because there is a difference of objectives. One is thinking theoretically...when one is concerned primarily with discerning the truth about some topic. One is thinking practically when one is concerned primarily to discover or determine what to do, to get, to have or to be»³⁶.

Grisez had distinguished the different modes of knowing of theoretical and practical reason in his 1965 article. He argued that theoretical reason knows by affirming or denying, while practical reason knows by prescribing³⁷. A further brief but helpful contrast of the two modes of knowing appeared

³⁵ FINNIS, J., *Natural Law and Natural Rights*, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

³⁶ FINNIS, J., *Fundamentals of Ethics*, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

³⁷ GRISEZ, G., «The First Principle of Practical Reason: A Commentary on the Summa Theologiae, 1-2, Question 94, Article 2», *op. cit.*, pp. 193-195.

early in the same article: «Practical reason is the mind working as a principle of action, not simply as a recipient of objective reality. It is the mind charting what is to be, not merely recording what already is»³⁸.

There is no mystery as to how theoretical reason begins to function. Based on our sensible experience, it forms general or abstract concepts about what things are. But how does practical reason begin to function? Finnis argues that practical reason begins to function «by experiencing one's nature, so to speak, from the inside, in the form of one's inclinations»³⁹. What it grasps, in a non-inferential way, is «that the object of the inclination which one experiences is an instance of a general form of good, for oneself (and others like one)»⁴⁰.

For Finnis, before the will acts, both speculative and practical reason have abstracted very general concepts of reality which serve as starting points for the functioning of reason. Speculative reason begins with the abstract concept of being and truth, while practical reason begins with the not quite so abstract concept of good as what will fulfill or actualize human inclinations.

According to Thomas, there is only one intellectual power that understands, namely the possible intellect. It is sometimes called the speculative intellect, and sometimes called the practical intellect, depending on how it functions. Thomas often simply distinguishes the two functions of the one intellect in terms of the end intended. It is the case, however, that a certain ambiguity enters into the question whether some knowledge is speculative or practical, and whether the intellect is functioning speculatively or practically. It is good to consider this before we continue. One of the clearest texts of Thomas on this ambiguity is from the *Summa Theologiae*⁴¹.

In that text Thomas distinguishes three reasons for calling knowledge speculative or practical: 1) the object known is either natural or divine, or it is something makeable or doable, 2) the way in which we are knowing the object is either as it is makeable or doable, or it is not, 3) the purpose for our knowing an object is either to make or do it, or simply to know it. If we know a natural thing just for the sake of knowing it, our knowledge is purely speculative. If we know an operable thing in the way in which it is operable and we intend

³⁸ GRISEZ, G., «The First Principle of Practical Reason: A Commentary on the *Summa Theologiae*, 1-2, Question 94, Article 2», *op. cit.*, p. 27.

³⁹ FINNIS, J., *Natural Law and Natural Rights*, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

⁴¹ AQUINAS, T., *Summa Theologiae*, *op. cit.*, I, q. 14, a. 16, body, pp. 85-86.

to make or do something on that basis, our knowledge is purely practical. If we mix the three criteria in other ways, we can end up with knowledge that is partly speculative and partly practical. For example, if we know an operable thing in the way it is not operable and clearly do not intend to make or do something on that basis, our knowledge is partly speculative and partly practical. Another example is taken from medicine. The human body is something natural and the knowledge of it is speculative knowledge. Yet we can and do seek speculative knowledge of the healthy state of the body for the practical purpose of helping the body to repair itself in the event it ceases to function properly. Such knowledge would be partly speculative and partly practical. This would be a clear case of the speculative intellect becoming practical by extension. If we apply this to the matter at hand, we see that a knowledge of our inclinations and the possible ways we can be actualized as the natural beings we are is inherently speculative knowledge and must be presupposed by practical reason and the will moving us over time to the achieving of perfection. Just as I must know what health is before seeking to achieve it, so also, I must have a specific grasp of what my perfection is before seeking practically to achieve it.

V. HOW ARE SPECULATIVE AND PRACTICAL INTELLECTS RELATED

According to St. Thomas the speculative intellect must function first and the practical intellect must function second. Finnis and Grisez appear to agree with this order of functioning. But after this the disagreements begin. Thomas holds that the speculative intellect grasps not only being and truth but also good originally. Finnis holds that while the speculative intellect originally grasps being and truth, it is the practical intellect that originally grasps good. For Thomas, not only must the speculative intellect be the first to grasp good as perfection or wholeness of being, but also the will must incline to good grasped speculatively, and only then can the practical intellect grasp good as to be pursued and done. This means there is a strong one-way dependence of the practical on the speculative intellect. For Finnis, it is the practical intellect that first grasps the concept of good, both as to be pursued and done and as perfective; then, for the first time, the will inclines to good as grasped by the practical intellect. This means that the practical intellect actively directs us to act, independent of the will. This means that there is more of an interdependence between the two intellects according to Finnis. When it comes to the

induction by which each functionally distinct intellect discovers its primary principles, it is referred to as happening in parallel, by each intellect abstracting from different data in sensible experience, rather than by one intellect depending on the other⁴².

Let us begin with Finnis' account of how we acquire the concept of good. Which intellect depends on the other, to the extent that there is a dependence, to grasp the concept of good? Early in *Natural Law and Natural Rights*, Finnis argues that it is the practical intellect which first grasps good:

«Nor is it true that for Aquinas 'good and evil are concepts analyzed and fixed in metaphysics before they are applied in morals. On the contrary, Aquinas asserts as plainly as possible that the first principles of natural law, which specify the basic forms of good and evil and which can be adequately grasped by anyone of the age of reason (and not just by metaphysicians), are per se nota (self-evident) and indemonstrable... They are not inferred or derived from anything. They are underived (though not innate)»⁴³.

Here practical reason seems to grasp good first with no dependence on speculative reason grasping good in any way. Finnis often enough comments that practical reason's grasp of good and of the first practical principles are not inferred from any speculative truths. That is true enough. But his claim here is stronger. Here he argues that the practical grasp of good is not derived from anything (other than our sensible experience). That, as we will see, both puts him at odds with Thomas' explanation of our first grasp of good, and has the practical intellect functioning speculatively.

Lest one think that Finnis holds that when practical reason grasps good originally it is not dependent on theoretical reason in any way, Finnis assures us that that is not the case. Since practical reason grasps good in its original way by an insight that depends on an awareness of the possibilities inherent in our inclinations, and possibilities are objective realities, our grasp of such possibilities must have been theoretical:

«If one is to go beyond the felt urge of curiosity to an understanding grasp of the value of knowledge, one certainly must know at least the fact that some questions can be answered. Moreover, one certainly will be as-

⁴² FINNIS, J., *Natural Law and Natural Rights*, op. cit., p. 77, note to III. 4.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 33-34.

sisted if one also knows such facts as that answers tend to hang together in systems that tend to be illuminating over as wide a range as the data which stimulate one's questions. But one who, thus knowing the possibility of attaining truth, is enabled thereby to grasp the value of that possible object and attainment is not inferring the value from the possibility. No such inference is possible. No value can be deduced or otherwise inferred from a fact or set of facts»⁴⁴.

In response to Finnis we must say that when we grasp the actualizing of a possibility we are grasping good in the speculative sense. We are grasping a thing being completed in its being by acting. That happens to be the truth about the nature of good. When Finnis says this enables me to grasp the value of the act of attaining truth, value must mean good in a sense distinct from perfection; he must mean good as what is to be attained by acting. If he does, one must object again that it is hard to explain the motivation to act without presupposing a prior act of the will. Finnis simply grants to the practical intellect the power to motivate us, apart from any act of will. So, also, he grants to the practical intellect the power to grasp good, not only as to be pursued, but also to be pursued because perfective. But if becoming perfect via acting is something we simply see as a fact, then he is granting a properly speculative act to the practical intellect⁴⁵.

Another instance of the dependence of practical reason on speculative knowledge already gained is to be found in the process of practical reasoning itself. A syllogism is practical basically if it begins with a major premise that is practical and concludes to a practical conclusion. Nothing prevents us from introducing speculative items of knowledge into such a practical syllogism in the form of the minor premise. Finnis and Grisez maintain as much in their 1981 response to McInerney:

«... only with the practical principle, 'Health is a good to be pursued and protected,' and additional factual premises can one validly pass from 'Wheaties are good for you' to 'You ought to eat Wheaties.' We have never said that one cannot pass from metaphysical and/or factual truths together with principles of practical reasoning to normative conclusions. Our point

⁴⁴ FINNIS, J., *Natural Law and Natural Rights*, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

⁴⁵ *Cfr.* JENSEN, S. J., *Knowing the Natural Law*, Catholic University of America Press, Washington, D.C., 2015, p. 71.

rather was that there can be no valid deduction of a normative conclusion without a normative principle, and thus that first practical principles cannot be derived from metaphysical speculations»⁴⁶.

This claim that one cannot infer practical conclusions from speculative premises is repeated often enough by Finnis and Grisez. Here they simply indicate that when we employ speculative knowledge in a piece of practical reasoning, it does not alter the fact that the reasoning is logically practical and not speculative if we begin with a practical premise. So, what happens if we say, in keeping with the Wheaties example: «Good is to be pursued», but goodness consists in perfection, and perfection is most of all attained when a thing acts well as the kind of thing it is, and for humans this is knowing what is most knowable, and that is God; hence knowing God is most of all to be pursued? This is exactly what Aristotle and Thomas seem to be doing. It is also what Finnis and Grisez reject. Why?

As far as the origination of knowledge in us is concerned, Finnis holds that the practical intellect has its starting point in our sensible experience, just as does the speculative intellect. In this respect they are similar:

«Aquinas followed Aristotle's theory of the 'induction' of indemonstrable first principles by insight working on observation, memory, and experience, but extended the account to a parallel 'induction' of indemonstrable first principles of practical reason (i.e. of natural law) by insight working on felt inclinations and a knowledge of possibilities: ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2...»⁴⁷.

Just as practical reason has its own, parallel, starting point in our sensible experience, so also practical reason is held to give us much knowledge of human nature prior to our speculative knowledge of our nature. Indeed, speculative reason supposedly depends to some extent on practical reason to come to an understanding of human nature:

«One understands human nature by understanding human capacities, those capacities by understanding human acts, and those acts by understanding their objects. That is Aquinas' primary methodological or, if you

⁴⁶ GERMAIN, G. and FINNIS, J. «The Basic Principles of Natural Law: A Reply to Ralph McInerny», *op. cit.*, p. 24.

⁴⁷ FINNIS, J., *Natural Law and Natural Rights*, *op. cit.*, note to III. 4, p. 77.

like, epistemological principle for considering the nature of an active being (11.3). But the objects of humanly chosen acts are precisely the basic purposes {fines}, i.e. goods {bona}, with which Aquinas is concerned, as we have seen, in his most elaborated account of first practical principles. So the epistemic source of the first practical principles is not human nature or a prior, theoretical understanding of human nature... Rather, the epistemic relationship is the reverse: any deep understanding of human nature, i.e. of the capacities which will be fulfilled by action which participates in and realizes those goods, those perfections, is an understanding which has amongst its sources our primary, undemonstrated but genuine practical knowledge of those goods and purposes»⁴⁸.

Now while it is certainly true that we may come to a deeper understanding of human nature by speculatively reflecting on our own actions, motivated as they are by both will and practical intellect, it remains the case that, through our sensible experience, we are strongly oriented toward the world about us. That orientation to the world about us tends to focus our attention on the actions, capacities to act, and the natures of things about us, including other human beings. Such an orientation to the world about us results in speculative and not inherently practical knowledge. Hence one question that arises here is why Finnis would be so focused on learning about human nature from the first-person point of view, *i.e.*, from internal reflection on our own practical actions, rather than the actions of the things revealed to us via our senses. Another objection to the above text is that the objects of our various powers are things we are inclined to naturally and not on the basis of combined acts of intellect and will.

According to Thomas, the object or end of the speculative intellect is simply truth (or, more properly, being and truth), while the object of the practical intellect is truth as directed to operation (acting or making). Because knowing truth is presupposed by the intellect directing that truth to a work of some kind, it is clear that the speculative intellect must act first. If there is no knowledge, simply speaking, of what exists, then no knowledge can be directed to making or doing something. Thomas makes this clear when he speaks of the knowledge of an artist: «It is clear that the practical knowledge of the artist follows his speculative knowledge, since it is made practical by applying

⁴⁸ FINNIS, J., *Aquinas: Moral, Political, and Legal Theory*, *op. cit.*, pp. 90-91.; *Fundamentals of Ethics*, *op. cit.*, p. 137. But *cf.* JENSEN, S. J., *Knowing the Natural Law*, *op. cit.*, pp. 71-73, 77.

the speculative to a work. But when the practical is absent, the speculative remains»⁴⁹. In the example given about the need to understand the human body if we are going to help it heal itself, it is clear that speculative knowledge must precede practical. And if we are concerned not with making but with acting, knowledge of what is to be done presupposes a desire to attain some goal. If the goal to be attained is a natural one, *i.e.*, one that corresponds to what we are as human beings, then our awareness of the goal must be initially speculative and not practical. We must first grasp what goal belongs to us as the natural kind of being we are, then we must desire the goal, then we can practically grasp the goal as to be attained by acting.

Another way to indicate the priority of the speculative to the practical intellect is by considering how each is called true. Consider the following text on the matter:

«For the truth of the speculative intellect is had by conformity of the intellect with the thing. And because the intellect cannot be infallibly conformed to things in contingents but only in necessary things, therefore no speculative habit of contingents is an intellectual virtue, but only about necessities. On the other hand, the truth of the practical intellect is had through conformity with right appetite. And this conformity has no place in necessary things, which are not made by the human will, but only in contingents which can be made by us, whether they be interior acts (*agibilia*) or exterior artifacts (*factibilia*)»⁵⁰.

The point is that even the very first thing known by the practical intellect (good is to be done, etc.) is true only by conformity with right appetite, *i.e.*, will as conformed to the speculative intellect's grasp of good. There is no reason why this *per se nota* practical truth should be an exception to how the practical intellect is true.⁵¹ Unless we somewhat irrationally declare that all judgements of the practical intellect are true by conformity with right desire except for the very first judgement, it clearly follows that the very first act of the intellect functioning practically presupposes an act of the will. Which means that the notion of good that is initially presented to the will by the intellect must be a speculative one.

⁴⁹ AQUINAS, T., *Truth, op. cit.*, I, q. 2, a. 8, c., p. 98.

⁵⁰ AQUINAS, T., *Summa Theologiae, op. cit.*, I-II q. 57, a. 5, ad. 3, p. 832.

⁵¹ FINNIS, J., *Fundamentals of Ethics, op. cit.*, p. 13, who quotes Adler to the contrary.

VI. PRACTICAL INTELLECT AND WILL

When it comes to how the practical intellect and the will are related to one another, Finnis agrees with Grisez and disagrees with Thomas. Both Grisez and Finnis hold that the practical intellect must act before the will acts. The reason seems to be that it is the practical and not the speculative intellect that must first grasp the notion of good and then offer that concept to the will as its natural object if natural law is to be organized around a single notion of good, *i.e.*, one that is practical, and if a single coherent understanding of the end of man is to be had. Recall that Grisez began his reformulation of natural law theory by being disturbed about the incoherence of Thomas' theory of the end of man. He was also disturbed by an apparent inconsistency between the theory of the end of man and the theory of natural law. Clearly the theory of natural law is rooted in the work of practical reason. The teaching on the end of man, on the other hand, would appear to be the work of speculative reason. Practical reason appears to have one account of the goods we should aim our lives at, while speculative reason appears to offer a different account. Perhaps the problem is that the notion of good is being defined by speculative and practical reason independently of one another, and that the resulting notions of good, or at least how the speculative and practical intellects reason about good, conflict. One way out of the conflict appears to be to allow only one of the two functionally distinct intellects to define good. If it is the practical intellect that is uniquely allowed to define the good, then it must do so, prior to any movement of the will. Another, closely related, reason may very well be the concern to respond to the is-ought dilemma supposedly originated by David Hume⁵². Whatever the basic motive for redefining the relation between the speculative and practical intellects, and the relation of the practical intellect to the will, Finnis, following Grisez, is concerned to have practical reason act prior to the will. Thomas, on the other hand, has the intellect turn practical only by dependence on a prior act of the will. That means the speculative intellect must be the first to grasp the notion of goodness.

It is Grisez who begins the process of redefining the relation between practical reason and the will. To be fair, he holds that he is not redefining the relation; he claims he is only stating Thomas' own position. After briefly

⁵² FINNIS, J., *Natural Law and Natural Rights*, *op. cit.*, pp. 36-42; *Aquinas*, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

indicating that practical reason must function before the will can act⁵³, he states his own position in more detail as follows:

«Nor is any operation of our own will presupposed by the first principles of practical reason. Of course, we do make judgements concerning means in accordance with the orientation of our intention toward the end. But our willing of ends requires knowledge of them, and the directive knowledge prior to the natural movements of our will is precisely the basic principles of practical reason. At any rate this is Aquinas's theory. He maintains that there is no willing without prior apprehension (ST I 82.4.3m). Moreover, the basic principle of desire, natural inclination in the appetitive part of the soul, is consequent upon prior apprehension, natural knowledge (In IV Sent. 33.1.1.9m). For the will, this natural knowledge is nothing else than the first principles of practical reason (In II Sent 39.2.2.2m). The precepts of natural law, at least the first principle of practical reason, must be antecedent to all acts of our will. There is nothing surprising about this conclusion so long as we understand law as intelligence ordering (directing) human action toward an end rather than as a superior ordering (commanding) a subject's performance»⁵⁴.

In response to Grisez it must be said that his conclusion does not follow from his argument. He thinks he is concluding that before any movement of the will there must occur an act of practical reason naturally knowing the first principles of practical reason. All he is really concluding, and all that he can validly take from the material, is that a natural movement of the will follows practical reason naturally knowing that good is to be pursued and done. A natural movement of the will does not equate to the very first movement of the will, just as the natural movement of the intellect grasping that good is to be done does not mean that that movement is the very first movement or activity of the intellect simply speaking. Just as the intellect knowing being and truth are natural acts, so also is the intellect knowing good, whether such knowledge be of the speculative or of the practical intellect. If it is the speculative intellect that first knows good, the will inclining toward such a grasp of good is natural. But so also is the inclination of the will toward the practical intellect's grasping

⁵³ GRIEZ, G., «The First Principle of Practical Reason: A Commentary on the *Summa Theologiae*, 1-2, Question 94, Article 2», *op. cit.*, p. 192.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 193.

that good is to be pursued natural, even if the will has already inclined toward good as grasped by the speculative intellect.

Finnis agrees with Grisez that the practical intellect acts prior to the will and is a motivating power independently of the will. This comes out to some extent early in *Natural Law and Natural Rights* when Finnis refers to «Hume's failure to see that reason is an 'active principle' because one is motivated according to one's understanding of the goodness and desirability of human opportunities...»⁵⁵. It also comes out to some extent near the end of the work when Finnis speaks of the need to understand a free and deliberate act «in terms of a series of interacting components»⁵⁶, and then lists an «intelligible grasp of an end, value, or objective»⁵⁷ as coming first. It comes out much more clearly in *Fundamentals of Ethics*, when he writes:

«Reason is practical, not by merely devising intelligent ways of pursuing desires which are simply presented to one's reason as, so to say, independent of and prior to the workings of one's intelligence. Rather, reason is practical first of all by identifying the desirable...»⁵⁸.

And, just a bit further on in the same place:

«...we should say not that practical reasoning begins with wants (or desires) and seeks satisfactory ways of satisfying them; but that practical reasoning begins by identifying something wanted (or desired), i.e. something considered (practically considered) desirable»⁵⁹.

He makes the same point in his work on Aquinas:

«Practical intelligence is not slave to the will any more than it is the slave of the passions. It moves our wills just in so far as, and in that, reasons can and often do motivate us. We are intelligently attracted by goods which are attractive to reason by reason of their intelligible goodness, i.e. by the benefits their instantiation promises»⁶⁰.

⁵⁵ FINNIS, J., *Natural Law and Natural Rights*, op. cit., p. 47.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 337.

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁸ FINNIS, J., *Fundamentals of Ethics*, op. cit., II. 2, p. 35; FINNIS, J., GRISEZ, G., and BOYLE, J., «Practical Principles, Moral Truth, and Ultimate Ends», op. cit., p. 106.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

⁶⁰ FINNIS, J., *Aquinas: Moral, Political, and Legal Theory*, op. cit., pp. 89-90.

One wonders who considered practical intelligence a slave to the will. If it is natural for intellect to become practical only presupposing the motivating power of a prior act of the will, this would not make the intellect a slave to the will; it would simply be the very nature of the practical intellect vis a vis the will. Further, reasons motivate us only presupposing a desire of a goal to be attained. If practical reason is to motivate us by itself and prior to any act of the will, then not only does Finnis seem to be making practical reason act like speculative reason by grasping good as completeness of being, but he also seems to incorporate a function natural to the will into practical reason. How strange practical reason has become.

In his commentary on the *De anima* of Aristotle, Thomas, in apparent agreement with Aristotle, states that the mind as a motive principle is the practical reason⁶¹. He then argues that «an object of desire is always the practical reason's starting point; what is first desired provides the end whence its deliberations begin»⁶². He then summarizes the relation between object of desire, will and practical reason: «it is clear that there is ultimately one mover, the object desired. For this both moves appetite and affords a starting point for the practical intellect»⁶³. Thomas then argues that if practical intellect and will are unified by forming one motive principle, then they must share the same nature in some sense. What is important to notice here is that they share one nature by the practical intellect sharing the nature of the will, and not vice versa:

«And it is reasonable that these two principles should be reduced to unity in the object of desire; for if both intellect and appetite are principles with respect to one and the same movement they must, as such, share the same specific nature; since a single effect implies always a single cause of precisely that one effect. Now it cannot be said that appetite is a moving principle through sharing the specific nature of intellect, but rather *e converso*; for intellect only moves anything in virtue of appetite. It moves by means of the will, which is a sort of appetite»⁶⁴.

⁶¹ ARISTOTLE'S, *De anima*, *op. cit.*, lectio 15, n. 820, p. 472.

⁶² *Ibid.*, n. 821.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, n. 823.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, n. 824, p. 473.

This clearly indicates that the intellect is practical by being subordinate to the will. The point that intellect does not move except in dependence on the will is stated also in other places⁶⁵.

VII. HOW REASON GRASPS GOODNESS

For Finnis and Grisez, as indicated in the preceding section, it is the practical intellect that first grasps good; hence it is the practical intellect which must precede the first act of the will by offering to the will its natural object. Since Finnis holds that the most basic notion of good is perfection or well-being, it follows that it must be the practical intellect that must grasp good as being perfect or complete in being. Since perfection in being seems to be an inherently speculative sense of being, since natures and what constitutes their perfection are a given, it seems that Finnis makes the practical intellect function both practically and speculatively. He even goes to the extreme of making the speculative intellect learn what goodness is from the practical intellect. It is true that it is the function of the practical intellect to seek ways in which we may perfect ourselves, but how is it the business of the practical intellect as directing the truth it knows to operation to originally grasp goodness as perfection or flourishing so that it may initially enable the will to function?

The question to be answered is exactly how practical reason grasps the concept of good with which it begins. Since the concept is an abstract starting point for practical reason, it seems it must grasp that starting point by abstracting from what is given to us via our sensible experience of the world and of ourselves. Employing the term ‘insight’, Finnis writes:

«The first principles of practical reason are ‘indemonstrable’ and ‘self-evident’. This does not mean that they are data-less intuitions, or ‘felt certainties’, or that one cannot be mistaken about them, or that they cannot be defended by rational considerations. On the contrary, Aquinas firmly holds that they are understood by what he calls ‘induction’ of principles, by which he means insight into data of experience (data preserved, after the direct experience, in the memory). ‘To reach a knowledge of them [first princi-

⁶⁵ AQUINAS, T., *Compendium of Theology*, *op. cit.*, part 1, ch. 32, p. 32; *Summa Contra Gentiles*, *op. cit.*, book I, ch. 72, p. 241; *Summa Theologiae*, *op. cit.*, I-I, q. 19, a. 4, ad. 4, p. 106.

ples, whether of speculative or of practical reason] we need sensory experience and memory.’ ... In discussing the first principles of practical reason, Aquinas indicates that we will understand and accept them only if we have the experience and other relevant knowledge needed to understand their terms...»⁶⁶.

Supposing we grasp our first notion of good inductively based on our sensory experience, the question remains: how do we grasp good as perfection by abstracting in a practical way from that experience? The answer is that goodness as perfection or as what is perfective is being understood precisely in grasping the possibility of actualizing our inclinations.

This point comes out most clearly when Grisez is writing about the nature of the practical reason. First he lays down the definition of good as object of tendency: «The intelligibility of good is: what each thing tends toward. This formula is a classic expression of what the word ‘good’ means»⁶⁷. Since the object of any tendency or inclination is, abstractly considered, the actualizing of that tendency and that can be equated with good as becoming whole or perfect, it turns out that practical reason somehow grasps good as perfection in grasping the possibility of actualizing any tendency. This is what Grisez appears to indicate a bit after his defining good as object of tendency:

«Practical reason’s task is to direct its object toward the point at which it will attain the fullness of realization that is conceived by the mind before it is delivered into the world... the basic precepts of practical reason accept the possibilities suggested by experience and direct the objects of reason’s consideration toward the fulfillments taking shape in the mind»⁶⁸.

Reflecting on what Grisez writes about «the fullness of realization that is conceived by the mind» and «fulfillments taking shape in the mind», one wonders whether the very notion of fulfillment is not an inherently speculative notion of good being imported into the activity of practical reason. It seems as if reason is acting practically in directing activity toward an end, but is it also acting practically in realizing that the end is my perfection or fulfill-

⁶⁶ FINNIS, J., *Aquinas: Moral, Political, and Legal Theory*, op. cit., pp. 87-88.

⁶⁷ GRISEZ, G., «The First Principle of Practical Reason: A Commentary on the *Summa Theologiae*, 1-2, Question 94, Article 2», op. cit., p. 178.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 179.

ment as a human being? What is actually happening is that when practical reason first grasps that «good is to be pursued», it is presupposing the notion of good as completeness of being from a prior act of the speculative intellect. This same concern arises in something Finnis writes near the beginning of his early work on natural law:

«Aquinas considers that practical reasoning begins not by understanding this nature from the outside, as it were, by way of...observations and judgments defining human nature, but by experiencing one's nature, so to speak, from the inside, in the form of one's inclinations. But again, there is no process of inference [i.e. as from one proposition to another]. One does not judge that 'I have [or everybody has] an inclination to find out about things' and then infer that therefore 'knowledge is a good to be pursued'. Rather, by a simple act of non-inferential understanding one grasps that the object of the inclination which one experiences is an instance of a general form of good, for oneself (and others like one)»⁶⁹.

When I, using my practical intellect and presupposing no prior grasp of good by the speculative intellect, experience my inclinations, why do I not simply see and say that inclinations are to be acted on? Suppose for the sake of argument that the practical intellect is not judging that desires or appetites are to be satisfied. The question remains, what justifies the practical intellect as practical to grasp the object of an inclination as an instance of a general form of good in the sense of wellness or fulness of being? How did that clearly speculative notion of good suddenly appear within reason functioning practically?

Let us raise an objection against ourselves. It can seem that Thomas is on the side of Grisez and Finnis in something Finnis cites after indicating that practical reason is grasping the basic aspects of our becoming more perfect:

«The account of the source of natural law thus focuses first on the experienced dynamisms of our nature, and then on the intelligible principles which outline the aspects of human flourishing, the basic values grasped by human understanding. A few pages later Aquinas formulates one of the fundamental theoretical principles of his account of the content of natural

⁶⁹ FINNIS, J., *Natural Law and Natural Rights*, *op. cit.*, p. 34; *cfr.*, pp. 45, 77.

law: ‘all those things to which man has a natural inclination, one’s reason naturally understands as good (and thus as ‘to be pursued’) and their contraries as bad (and as ‘to be avoided’)»⁷⁰.

Is not Thomas himself agreeing with Grisez and Finnis when he says that objects of our natural inclinations are naturally understood as good? Is that not exactly what Finnis is claiming? At this point we must recall that Thomas distinguished two senses of good: one theoretical and one practical. The theoretical sense of good is also called the truth about good; it is good as completeness of being. But the theoretical sense of good according to Thomas is grasped precisely by speculative reason and not by the practical. The practical sense of good is goodness as dependent on appetite motivating us to act so as to attain things existing independently of us.

But the practical sense of good as outlined by Thomas is exactly what Finnis and Grisez do not need if they are going to have good as perfection grasped by the practical intellect prior to any act of the will. In another quote taken from the work on natural law, Finnis is concerned to remove desire and appetite from the notion of good being grasped by practical reason:

«... the understanding affirmation of the practical principle [that truth is a good – and mutatis mutandis for all the other basic values] is neither a reference to nor an expression of any desire or urge or inclination of mine. Nor is it merely a reference to (or implied presupposition of) any desires that my fellows happen to have. It goes beyond the desires and inclinations which may first have aroused my interest in the possibility of knowledge and which may remain a necessary substratum of any interest in truth sufficient to move me to pursue it for myself. It is a rational judgement about a general form of human well-being, about the fulfilment of a human potentiality»⁷¹.

The judgement in question is that truth is a good. The question is: what does good mean in the judgement? If it is not merely a claim that truth is to be pursued, if it is simply a claim that truth is a general form of human well-being, then the notion of good used here is clearly speculative and not practical. The puzzle remains as to how Finnis can claim it is practical reason that is originally grasping good as well-being or fulfillment.

⁷⁰ FINNIS, J., *Natural Law and Natural Rights*, op. cit., p. 403.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

What would be the problem, according to Finnis, with allowing a speculative grasp of good to precede and prepare the way for the practical grasp of good? One response appears to be that it is simply not needed. As Finnis claimed in his response to Professor Veatch: «the basic principles of natural law can all be intelligently grasped without adverting to metaphysical principles concerning the universal relationship between being and good»⁷².

Another response is that the practical concept of good simply comes first.⁷³ And if one supposes that a theoretical grasp of good does precede the practical grasp, Finnis' response is that the theoretical grasp would serve no purpose: «If 'Knowledge is a good for man' were understood theoretically, simply as a truth of metaphysical anthropology, then it would have no more normative implication than 'Knowledge is good for angels' has practical implication for us». What Finnis says is true enough and is an instance of his argument that a piece of reasoning that begins with a speculative primary premise cannot end in a practical conclusion. It does not, however, preclude a speculative concept of good from preceding and making possible the first practical principle. The mere concept of good as perfective makes no claim to be true or false; it simply provides a meaning on which the first practical principle can rely.

This anticipates another possible response to why we need no speculative concept of good to precede the practical one, namely the first principle of practical reason is known per se. If it is known per se, does that not mean that it presupposes no prior information? The answer is that it does not. As Finnis reminds us: «Self-evident principles are per se nota – known just by knowing the meaning of their terms»⁷⁴. The question is whether we understand the meaning of good as perfect or complete solely by means of the functioning of practical reason. I argue that we do not.

There is a final response to whether a speculative concept of good should precede the grasp of good by the practical reason. The objection is that a purely speculative grasp of good, such as is found in Aristotle's function ar-

⁷² FINNIS, J., «The Natural Law and the «Is» – «Ought» Question: An Invitation to Professor Veatch», *The Catholic Lawyer*, vol. 26, 1981, pp. 266–277, p. 276; *Natural Law and Natural Rights*, *op. cit.*, pp. 35–36, 42.

⁷³ FINNIS, J., *Fundamentals of Ethics*, *op. cit.*, p. 12; «The Natural Law and the «Is» – «Ought» Question: An Invitation to Professor Veatch», *op. cit.*, p. 272.

⁷⁴ FINNIS, J., GRISEZ, G., and BOYLE, J., «Practical Principles, Moral Truth, and Ultimate Ends», *op. cit.*, p. 106.

gument from *Nicomachean Ethics*, I.7, and from Thomas' treatise on the end of man that concludes with the claim that the most perfect knowing of God by speculative reason is what perfects man more than anything else, would literally create obstacles for a unified and coherent account of the ends for which we act. Finnis characterized Aristotle's 'function' argument, which is a speculative consideration of what action would be most perfective of a human being, as an erratic boulder, *i.e.*, as an obstacle which does not really belong in Aristotle's *Ethics*:

«The 'function' argument is not the deep structure of Aristotle's ethical method; it is an erratic boulder. The whole argument of the *Ethics* concludes to a proposition about what is natural to man, in the sense of truly appropriate to and fulfilling for human beings; but that is the conclusion, or a way of expressing the conclusion, and the arguments for it are found elsewhere. Where?»⁷⁵.

Aristotle inserted his function argument in the first book of his *Nicomachean Ethics* after trying to determine the end of human life by considering what ends human beings practically seek. It was precisely because humans seek a variety of ends, often bad ones, that Aristotle switched from his practical definition of good, that at which all things aim, to a speculative definition of good, the most perfect way of performing that act which is most characteristic of a thing. The speculative definition presupposes that happiness is being in the most perfect state of actuality one can be in, although Aristotle does not put it in that way. The argument is not at all erratic, nor is it a boulder, *i.e.*, an obstacle; it is simply a way of combining speculative with practical reasoning in a treatise that is overall practical in nature. Aristotle is simply trying to clarify the concept of good. Finnis seems to think that the way Aristotle does so is a problem⁷⁶. When it comes to Thomas combining both speculative and practical reasoning in determining the end of man, Finnis agrees with Grisez that it results in even more of a problem:

«No doubt Aristotle has an argument that man's highest good is the good most proper to him. But where does Thomas make this argument his own? Would it not be disastrous for a Christian theologian, who thinks that man's

⁷⁵ FINNIS, J., *Fundamentals of Ethics*, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

supreme good is communion with God, to adopt Aristotle's line of argument, when communion with the divine persons is not proper to man, but is naturally proper only to the divine persons themselves, and is shared by their supernatural gift not only with men but also with angels?»⁷⁷

Let us briefly consider this argument. First, where does Thomas make Aristotle's argument his own? In *Summa Theologiae* (*op. cit.*, I-II, q. 3, a. 5, c.), Thomas argues that happiness consists in an act of the speculative intellect directed at the highest object, *i.e.*, God. He also says in the same place that such an operation is most proper to man. A little further on he argues that in the contemplative life man shares something in common with God and the angels. So, the question arises how contemplating God can be both proper to man and something he shares with God and the angels. If we assume that contemplation of the highest being is proper to man, not as rational animal, but as intellectual being, in common with God and angels, the seeming conflict is removed.

But what about the argument that contemplation of God is not proper to any being other than God? Here Thomas makes a distinction. Contemplation of God is natural and proper to man in one way and in another not. It is natural and proper to man insofar as we have a natural desire to know what things are and will never know what contingent beings are until we see their cause, *i.e.* God, and see what God is. So, we have a natural desire, which is therefore proper to us, to see God. But we cannot do so on our own; men and angels need special assistance from God to see God as He is in Himself. That means we have a natural desire to do something we have no natural ability to do. Hence the contemplation of God is in one way natural and proper and in another not. It is a mistake to emphasize only the way in which it is not natural and proper to us and ignore the way it is natural and proper to us. It is like saying one does not like the way things are. Let us now consider Thomas' account of how reason grasps goodness.

Since the intellect is initially receptive, our first notion of goodness must come from such a reception and be speculative in kind. Goodness as perfection or wholeness in being is our initial notion of goodness. It is grasped both in our observation of things in the world about us acting, and also in our

⁷⁷ GRISEZ, G., and FINNIS, J., «The Basic Principles of Natural Law: A Reply to Ralph McInerny», *op. cit.*, p. 29; AQUINAS, T., *Super librum de Causis Expositio*, Saffrey, H.D. (ed.), lectio 1, Fribourg, Louvain, 1954, pp. 1-2, and *Summa Theologiae*, *op. cit.*, I-II, q. 3, a. 5, c., for the argument that the ultimate happiness of man consists in the perfection of the intellect, which is his highest power.

self-awareness of our own act of knowing anything. Such a notion of goodness is what enables the will to initially incline to goodness as to its proper object. Since the orientation of the will is to things in themselves, it pulls us out of ourselves. Once the will inclines to goodness as to something independent of us which is to be sought, the intellect, always aware of movements of the will, grasps good in a new and practical way, *i.e.*, as what is to be pursued and attained.

Let us consider how the intellect arrives at the speculative grasp of the good. If we are first acted on by things in the world about us acting on our senses, and if the intellect takes its knowledge initially from the senses, this means that our initial knowledge of reality is focused on things other than ourselves. It also means that our first knowledge of reality is speculative in nature, because we are simply observing what has been given to us. If the intellect is initially blank and is in potency to knowing things and must be actuated, that means that our first knowledge of reality must provide the foundation and background for all succeeding knowledge. This is why the first concept that falls into the intellect, according to Thomas, is the concept of being. This initial vague grasping of being is simply the grasping of anything given to us through our senses as «a having being». The being that is had is existence, which is being in the verbal sense. There is no more general concept than that of being because everything else we know presupposes a grasp of being. Our other concepts are ways of grasping something about being.

A second universal concept, which must come almost immediately after the concept of being, is that of truth. The reason is that as soon as the possible intellect is activated by having anything at all imposed on it, it itself becomes an automatic object of its own awareness. This is called concomitant self-awareness. In other words, as soon as I know anything else, I am automatically aware that I am knowing something else. That means the intellect can immediately see that the content of its act of knowing corresponds to the thing known. This correspondence is nothing other than the relation called truth. Because of this concomitant self-awareness, Thomas often holds that the proper object of the intellect is not just being and not just truth, but being and truth. We grasp being as the most universal essence of the material things given to us via our senses. We grasp truth as the relation between our knowing and what we know. These are both objects of the speculative intellect.

Concomitant awareness of our own act of intellectual knowing can also yield the initial grasp of what good is: *i.e.*, the actualizing of a thing. In this case, it is the intellect's own act of knowing which it can focus on either ac-

cording to its content or according to the fact that it is simply an activity. If the act of knowing is focused on according to its content and that content is seen to correspond to the material thing known simply as a being, we have the grasp of truth. If, on the other hand, the act of knowing is grasped or focused on simply as an activity, then the intellect grasps that it is in act. But for anything to be in act, especially to be in act by acting, is for the thing to be good, since goodness is the perfecting or actualizing of a thing. This same notion of good as more complete actuality is had every time we grasp a thing as acting. Remember that the notion of being is allied more closely to substantial being, while the notion of good is allied more closely to accidental being completing or perfecting substantial being. Hence any time we grasp a thing as acting we are grasping it as good in the most basic sense. And because we naturally delight in goodness, we naturally delight to watch things act, especially if they act well as the kinds of things they are.

This order of grasping: first being, then truth, and then goodness, is stated by Thomas as follows:

«Now the intellect apprehends primarily being itself; secondly, it apprehends that it understands being; and thirdly, it apprehends that its desires being. Hence the idea of being is first, that of truth second, and the idea of good third, though good is in things»⁷⁸.

When Thomas refers here to the intellect apprehending that it desires being, he clearly does not mean substantial being is what is desired. Nor does he mean that the will is desiring being in any sense. He is referring to the intellect as a natural appetite inclining to, *i.e.*, desiring, its own activity. In other words, he is referring to the intellect being aware that it is naturally inclining to perform its own act of knowing. In order to grasp its natural inclination to an object, it must grasp the object inclined toward. That object is its own activity, which is its own actualization.

This notion of good as actualization or perfection is what Thomas refers to as the truth about goodness⁷⁹. The truth about goodness, which is clearly a speculative and not a practical sense of good, is grasped before good as appetible. The reason is that before the will can incline toward good as its proper

⁷⁸ AQUINAS, T., *Summa Theologiae*, *op. cit.*, I-I, q. 16, a. 4, ad. 2, p. 92.

⁷⁹ AQUINAS, T., *Truth*, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, q. 3, a. 3, ad 9, m, p. 155.

object, the speculative intellect must grasp the truth about good. After the will inclines toward good grasped according to its truth by the speculative intellect, a new sense of good is revealed and subsequently grasped by the intellect functioning practically, *i.e.*, good as appetible:

«The good considered as such, *i.e.* as appetible, pertains to the will before pertaining to the reason. But considered as true it pertains to the reason, before, under the aspect of goodness, pertaining to the will: because the will cannot desire a good that is not previously apprehended by reason»⁸⁰.

Thomas is here distinguishing two senses of good which he, following Aristotle, often does: good as appetible, or good under the aspect of goodness, which is Aristotle's good as that which all things desire, on the one hand, and the truth about goodness, or good as true, which is goodness as perfection or fulness of being, which itself is realized through the activities or operations of a thing, and which corresponds to Aristotle's good as the functioning of a thing as the kind of thing it is. Thomas agrees with Aristotle's good as function argument in various ways. One is indicated when he argues: «... the last thing through which any real being is ordered to its end is its operation»⁸¹. In a discussion on truth, after saying that the true and good are mutually inclusive, Thomas indicates that when only the truth about good is considered we are considering good speculatively, and when good is considered as the end of a motion or operation we are considering the good practically⁸². Recall from the quote above from (*vid.*, quote 80) that the good considered as true pertains to reason before pertaining to the will and that the good considered as good or as appetible pertains to the will before pertaining to reason. Since the good considered as true is a speculative consideration and the good considered as good or appetible is a practical consideration, it is clear that the good as true must come before any act of the will and that the good as appetible and as practical depends on an act of the will to be what it is.

This brings us to how we know good as appetible or as the end of a motion or operation, *i.e.*, how we know good in the practical sense. This should be clear by now. The good as appetible pertains to the will before it pertains

⁸⁰ AQUINAS, T., *Summa Theologiae*, *op. cit.*, I-II, q. 19, a. 3, ad. 1, p. 673.

⁸¹ AQUINAS, T., *Summa Contra Gentiles*, *op. cit.*, book 3, part I, ch. 22, n. 1, p. 83.

⁸² AQUINAS, T., *Truth*, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, q. 3, a. 3, ad 9, p. 155.

to reason. This means that the intellect can grasp good as appetible only based on the inclination of our appetites. With respect to the intellect as a natural appetite for its own act of knowing, the intellect could be said to like or delight in its own act of knowing as its actualization; it could not be said to desire its own act as something existing in itself which is not possessed but could be. The intellect inclining by nature to its own act of knowing does not make its act good; rather, the inclining to its act as to its goal or end simply enables the intellect to see its act as good.

Inclining toward a thing which exists in itself, as something of which we must be aware in order to tend to it, is the very nature of a cognitive appetite, i.e. the sense appetites and the will⁸³. When the practical intellect first grasps good as appetible, it grasps it as what is to be done and pursued. Doing and pursuing things depends on appetite moving us to act for something we do not possess. Because good must first be grasped speculatively in order for the will to act at all, and the will inclining toward good as grasped speculatively must occur before the intellect can grasp good as what is to be done, we see why Thomas sometimes repeats Aristotle's reasoning that the speculative intellect becomes practical by extension⁸⁴. The speculative intellect possesses its good within itself; the practical intellect does not possess its good within itself but must first incline to the good that is desired as not possessed and then calculate what works must be done to possess such goods.

Every power of acting can be called a natural appetite insofar as it has a natural inclination to perform its own act. The actions of any power of acting exist within the power. Hence a natural appetite is an inclination to something existing within the one inclining. But in addition to having a natural appetite for its own act, cognitive appetites incline us to things as they exist in themselves and not in us. The inclinations of such cognitive appetites can be wholly natural and in keeping with the nature of the thing having such appetites. It is just such natural inclinations which Thomas has in mind when he writes that practical reason naturally grasps all those things to be good to which we have natural inclinations⁸⁵. It is also possible for us to have inclinations which are

⁸³ AQUINAS, T., *Truth*, *op. cit.*, q. 22, a. 10, c, pp. 69-70.

⁸⁴ AQUINAS, T., *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum Magistri Petri Lombardi*, Mandonnet, P. and Moos, M.F. (eds.), 4 vols., Paris, 1929-1947, *In III Sent.*, d. 23, q. 2, a. 3, qc. 2, c; *Truth*, *op. cit.*, q. 22, a. 10, objection 4; *Summa Theologiae*, *op. cit.*, I, q. 79, a. 11, sed contra; *Summa Theologiae*, II-II, q. 4, a. 2, ad. 3.

⁸⁵ AQUINAS, T., *Summa Theologiae*, *op. cit.*, I-II, q. 94, a. 2, c, vol. 1, pp. 1009-1010.

not natural but confused, even though they are based on natural inclinations. For example, when Pavlov conditioned dogs to salivate when a bell was rung, he was using natural inclinations to create a non-natural inclination within the dogs. And when a homosexual has what he regards as a natural inclination to have sexual relations with another man he is confusing and conflating two distinct but closely related inclinations with one another: the natural inclination towards sexual activity, on the one hand, and the natural inclination to achieve his mature masculinity through close association with other male human beings. In this case the good grasped by the practical intellect is not a natural good naturally apprehended but rather a merely apparent good grasped on the basis of a confused conflating of two natural goods. But whether the good to be pursued is truly natural or artificial, the conclusion remains the same: the intellect acts practically only on the basis of a previous act of a cognitive appetite inclining us to some good as it exists in itself and not in us.

CONCLUSION

Finnis joined Grisez in the project of providing a new foundation for traditional natural law theory. The problem they had with the theory as handed down from St. Thomas was a perceived incompatibility between what Thomas says about natural law and the ends for which we act in the treatise on natural law in the *Summa Theologiae* and the treatise on the end of man from the beginning of *Summa theologiae* I-II. The problem seemed to arise from the natural law treatise being based on the work of the practical intellect and the treatise on the end of man being based on work of the speculative intellect. Should one go with what the speculative intellect has to say about the goods and ends for which we act or with what the practical intellect has to say? Because additional problems were perceived to exist in the treatise on the end of man taken from the activity of the speculative intellect, it seems that the new foundation would best be prepared by basing it entirely on the work of the practical intellect. To accomplish this Grisez and Finnis argued that the concept of good is originally grasped inductively by the practical intellect reflecting on inclinations and possibilities presented to us on the level of the senses. The next step was clearly to argue that the practical intellect acts prior to any act of the will. In this way the practical intellect does not accept good as its initial object from the will. This preserves natural law theory as rooted in reason and not in acts of our appetitive powers.

In addition to having good grasped originally by the practical intellect and the practical intellect doing so prior to any act of the will, Grisez and Finnis altered both the nature of the practical intellect and the relations between the speculative and practical intellects. Since they have the practical intellect grasp the concept of good as perfection or as completeness of being before the speculative intellect, and since the concept of good as perfection is an inherently speculative notion, they have the practical intellect acting both practically and speculatively. In order to have the practical intellect act prior to the first act of the will, they have to make the practical intellect a motive or directing power completely independently of the will. The problem is that common human experience tells us that it is appetitive powers that motivate us and not cognitive ones, unless they are subordinate to an appetitive power. The practical intellect, having been distinguished from both speculative intellect and will, arrogates to itself acts proper to the speculative intellect and will. This is incoherent. If we evaluate the theory of natural law and the account of the end of man as we find it in Thomas, it seems coherent and in keeping with common human experience. If we evaluate the theory of natural law and the account of the end of man as we find it in Finnis and Grisez, it seems rather incoherent and not in keeping with common human experience.

REFERENCES BIBLIOGRAPHIC

- AERTSEN, J. A., «Natural Law in the Light of the Doctrine of Transcendentals», *Lex et Libertas*, Elders S.V.D., L.J., and Hedwig, K. (eds.), Citta del Vaticano, 1987.
- AQUINAS, T., *Compendium of Theology*, trans., Vollert, C., S.J., B. Herder Book Co., St. Louis, 1947.
- *Super librum de Causis Expositio*, ed. H. D. Saffrey, Fribourg, Louvain, 1954.
- *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum Magistri Petri Lombardi*, Mandonnet P. and Moos, M.F. (eds.), 4 vols., Paris, 1929-1947.
- *On the Power of God*, trans., by the English Dominican Fathers, The Newman Press, Westminster, Maryland, 1952.
- *Summa Contra Gentiles*, book I, trans., Pegis, A.C., F.R.S.C., University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, 1955; book III, Part I, trans., Bourke, V.J., Notre Dame, 1956.
- *Summa Theologiae*, trans., Fathers of the English Dominican Province, 3 vols., Benziger Brothers, New York, 1947-1948.
- *Truth*, q. 3, a. 3, ad. 9, trans., Mulligan, R.W., S.J., 3 vols., Henry Regnery Company, Chicago, 1952.

- ARISTOTLE'S, *De Anima in the version of William of Moerbeke and the Commentary of St. Thomas Aquinas*, trans: Kenelm Foster, O.P. and Silvester Humphries, O.P., Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1951.
- FINNIS, J., *Aquinas: Moral, Political, and Legal Theory*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1998.
- *Fundamentals of Ethics*, Georgetown University Press, Georgetown, 1983.
- «Natural Inclinations and Natural Rights: Deriving 'Ought' from 'Is' According to Aquinas», *Freedom and Law According to St. Thomas Aquinas*, Elders, L.J., S.V.D. and Hedwig (eds.), K., Vatican City, 1987.
- *Natural Law and Natural Rights*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1980.
- «The Natural Law and the «Is» – «Ought» Question: An Invitation to Professor Veatch», *The Catholic Lawyer*, vol. 26, 1981.
- «Practical Reasoning, Human Goods, and the End of Man», *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association*, 1984.
- FINNIS, J., GRISEZ, G., and BOYLE, J., «Practical Principles, Moral Truth, and Ultimate Ends», *American Journal of Jurisprudence*, vol. 32, 1987.
- GRISEZ, G., «The First Principle of Practical Reason: A Commentary on the Summa Theologiae, 1-2, Question 94, Article 2», *Natural Law Forum*, vol. 10, n. 1, 1965.
- «Man, Natural End of», *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed., 15 vol., 2003.
- GRISEZ, G., and FINNIS, J., «The Basic Principles of Natural Law: A Reply to Ralph McInerny», *American Journal of Jurisprudence*, n. 26, 1981.

